3. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein the inert, non-alkaline coating and the system of modified release are mixed in a single layer.

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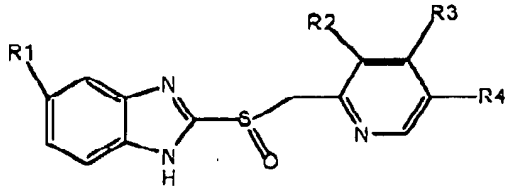
4. (Currently amended) A pellet according to claim 25, in which said one or more intermediate layers (c) comprise a mixture of one or more layers of inert, non-alkaline coating, and one or more layers of said system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water~~, and one or more layers of a mixture of inert, non-alkaline coating, and said system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water~~.

5. (Previously presented) A pellet according to claim 25, wherein the inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients is disposed over the layer (b), wherein the layer comprises the system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water which is disposed over the layer of the inert, non-alkaline coating; and the layer (d) is disposed over the layer formed by the system of modified release comprising an inert non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water.

6. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is a compound of formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is hydrogen methoxy or difluoromethoxy;

R^2 is methyl or methoxy;

R^3 is methoxy, 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy or 3-methoxypropoxy; and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

7. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is selected from the group consisting of omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole and mixtures thereof.

8. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, present in the layer (b) is selected from hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC) and hydroxypropylcellulose (HPC).

9. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25, wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water of the inert, non-alkaline coating, present in the intermediate layer(s) (c) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

10. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water of the system of modified release, present in the one or more intermediate layers (c) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

11. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert polymer insoluble in water of the system of modified release, present in the one or more intermediate layers (c) is ethylcellulose or a copolymer of ammonium methacrylate.

12. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said external layer (d) comprises a gastro-resistant polymer, a plasticizer and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients.

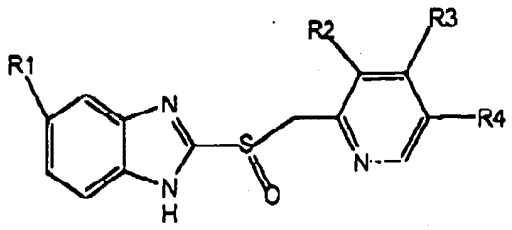
13. (Currently amended) A method for obtaining a gastro-resistant pellet of modified release that contains as an active ingredient an acid labile benzimidazole compound, that comprises:

(i)applying an aqueous suspension of an acid labile benzimidazole compound, an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients to cover an inert nucleus, wherein said inert excipients do not react in the conditions used;

(ii) applying one or more intermediate layers, separated or mixed among themselves that contain (i) an inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients; and (ii) a system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water, wherein the weight ratio of the inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water to the inert polymer insoluble in water is ~~50:85 to 15:50~~ 0.18 to 1:1 (15/85 to 50/50) to , a plasticizer and an anti-tack agent, separate or mixed; and

(iii) covering said intermediate layer or layers with an aqueous suspension that comprises a gastro-resistant polymer, a plasticizer and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients to create an external layer of enteric coating.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is a compound of formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is hydrogen, methoxy or difluoromethoxy;

R^2 is methyl or methoxy;

R^3 is methoxy, 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy or 3-methoxypropoxy; and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is selected from the group consisting of omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole and mixtures thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, present in the suspension applied in

step (i) is selected from hydroxypropyl-methylcellulose (HPMC) and hydroxypropylcellulose (HPC).

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, comprised in the inert, non-alkaline coating, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, comprised in the system of modified release, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said inert polymer insoluble in water, comprised in the system of modified release, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is ethylcellulose or a copolymer of ammonium methacrylate.

20 (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release that comprises one or more pellets of claim 25.

21. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 having the same release profile.

22. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 having a different release profile.

23. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 which have (i) a quick release profile and (ii) a slow release profile in a ratio between 10:90 and 90:10 by weight.

24. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 20, in the form of a capsule or a tablet.

25. (Currently amended) A pellet comprising an acid labile benzimidazole compound, wherein the pellet comprises:

(a) an inert nucleus;

(b) a layer disposed over said inert nucleus (a), consisting of an acid labile benzimidazole compound, an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients wherein said excipients do not react in the conditions used;

(c) one or more intermediate layers that comprise:

(i) an inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients; and

(ii) a system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water, wherein the weight ratio of the inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water to the inert polymer insoluble in water is ~~50:85 to 15:50~~ 0.18 to 1:1 (15/85 to 50/50) ; said intermediate layer(s) (c) disposed over said layer (b) that covers the inert nucleus; and

(d) an external layer comprising an enteric coating disposed over said intermediate layer(s) (c).